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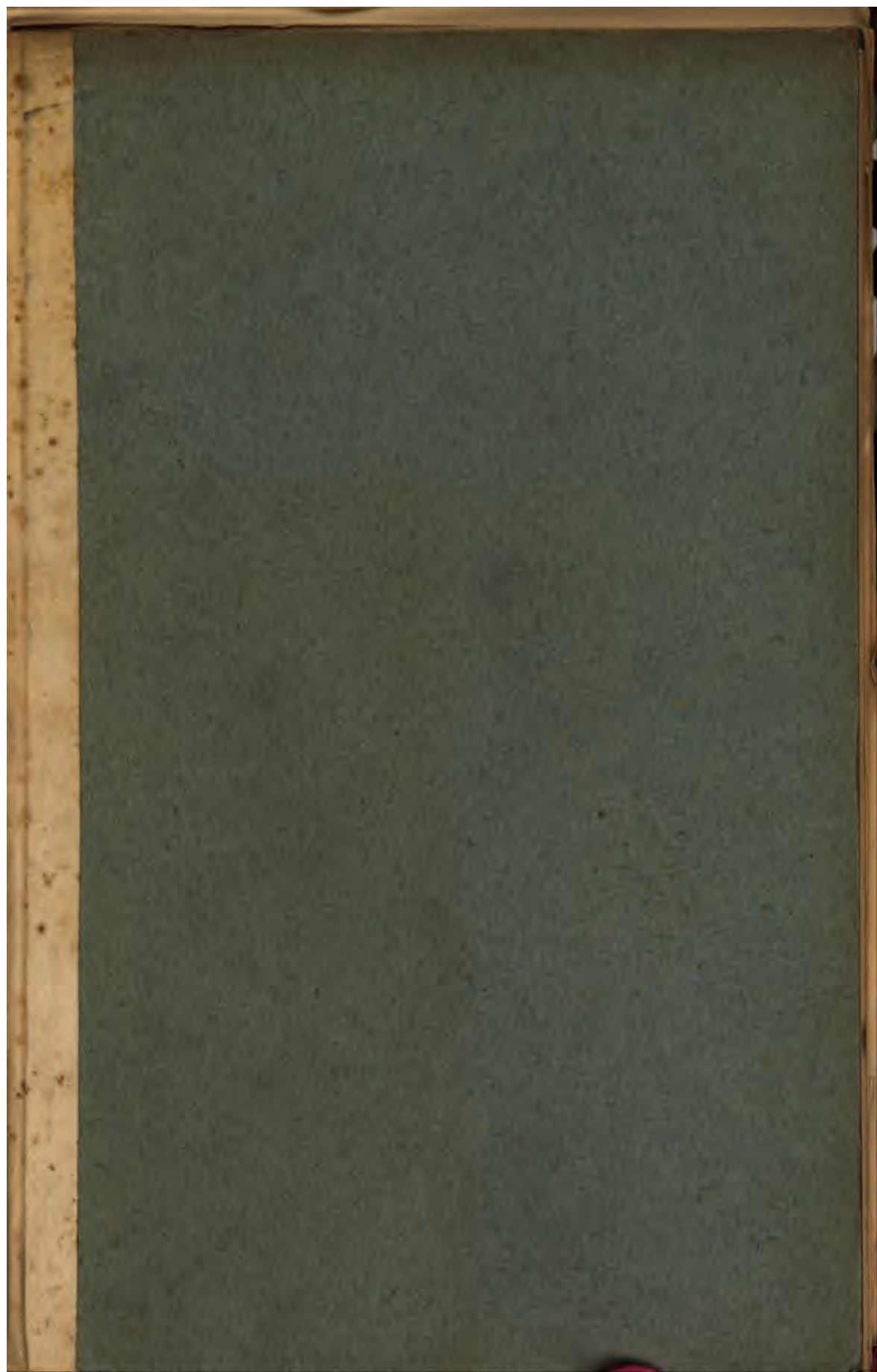
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When Russia had partly recovered from the fearful strain of the Crimean war, she recommenced operations in Central Asia, and directed her measures, in the first instance, against Kokund. Her steps were slow but were attended with results, and were always carefully planned with the view of securing what has already been attained. The Polish insurrection was rather a check upon the measures of the Russians in Asia, which were nevertheless not entirely stopped. In the summer of 1864 a decisive blow was aimed at Kokund. The towns of Toorkistan and Aulieata were occupied, a line of communication was established between them, and the Russian boundary was extended to the Syr-Daria. d/

In the same year the Russians, under General Tchernayeff, advanced upon the strongly fortified town of Chumkund, and took it after a hard fight. In the next year Tashkund, the most important town of Kokund, and one of the most considerable in Central Asia, was conquered, and the occupied territory was rendered sufficiently secure by the establishment of a line of forts. By a decree of the Czar the whole conquered district was incorporated with the Russian dominions under the name of Toorkistan, and a military district, the fifth in Asia, was founded.

In the meanwhile the relations of Russia with the Ameer of Bokhara had assumed a hostile form. It is certain that Russia gave no occasion for this hostility, and, indeed, it was impossible that she could wish for fresh complications with the most powerful State of Central Asia before her newly-conquered territories were in a settled condition. This can be readily understood if it is considered how small the forces were which the Russians,—far removed from their original basis of operations, Orenbourg,—had at their command.

On the other side the Ameer of Bokhara cannot be blamed for making preparations to check the further advance of the Russians, as these latter were the means of preventing him from exercising any further influence upon Kokund.

But the Ameer hardly chose the right means to attain this end, but confined himself at first to various insults against the Russian Government, and at last laid violent hands on the embassy which had been sent to Bokhara, according to the express wish of the Ameer, for the purpose of fixing the boundaries between the two territories.

General Tchernayeff, Commander-in-Chief in Toorkistan, demanded that the ambassadors should be set at liberty, and as this was not complied with, he marched against Bokhara with weak forces, and after great loss was obliged to retreat.

General Romanovski, who had taken Tchernayeff's place in the meantime, tried a new course of proceeding, and completely defeated the ruler of Bokhara at Yedschar, not far from Samarkund.

The Russian forces were too inconsiderable to follow up properly this great success, and they contented themselves, as usual, in a highly reasonable manner, with building strongholds to secure themselves from attack in return. They then again marched upon Kokund, conquered the important town of Khojund, and, in 1866, took the Bokharian fortresses of Ooratippa and Jeesukh, thus putting an end to the Ameer's intrigues with Kokund.

The territory conquered from the khanate of Kokund was, in 1867, made over, as a part of the new province of the Syr-Daria, to the Governor Generalship of Toorkistan. And the Russians concluded a most advantageous treaty of commerce with the Khan of Kokund.

The Russians still remained on bad terms with the Bokharians. The latter dared not venture on open warfare, though they made preparations for it, and applied for help to the Toorkomans, who, however, declined to be drawn into the matter. But little hostilities occurred frequently between Bokhara and Russia, and the inhabitants of Kokund allowed themselves to be seduced into an attempt to revolt, which was, however, at once suppressed.

The Russian power also came into conflict with Yakoob Beg, the Ruler of Kashgar and Yarkund, who was able to maintain his independence in the face of the Chinese Empire. By the subjection of part of Kokund, and the commercial treaties which had been thereupon concluded with that country, the Russians were brought much nearer to the realization of their old idea to open a route for trading purposes with India, and hoped now to succeed in taking caravans from Khojund to Kashgar and Yarkund, and from thence by the Karakorum Pass over the Kiun-Loon Range as far as the Indus. Yakoob Beg, however, would not open the passage through his territory to the

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We shall not have to wait long for the realization of this scheme. There is a project of establishing from thence railway communication on the one side with the Irtysh, on the other side with Tashkund and Khojund, and there will probably be a further extension to Samarkund and Bokhara.

7/ The project of laying out a railroad along the Amoo-Daria towards its upper course as far as the confines of Afghanistan, is already engaging attention, and thus Peter the Great's plan of a communication for trading purposes with India has been brought nigh its accomplishment. Whether the relations of Russia with Afghanistan, which for the moment are of a friendly nature, will long continue so, so that a brisk trade can be developed, and Afghanistan can become the connecting tie with India, is a question for the future. At all events, when the Russian position in Central Asia is sufficiently secure, and especially when their relations with Khiva, which just now appear to be changing for the worse, have been put on the same footing as those with Bokhara and Kokund, the Russians will not be kept back by any resistance on the part of Afghanistan, from removing the last hindrance which prevents them from drawing near to India.

We will not dwell on the reflection whether this would lead to a conflict with England, but direct their attention to the actual course of the advance of the Russians in Central Asia, of which we have given to the reader a concise historical summary.

*We have shown that Russia was not bent on conquests, that she had not that object in view, and that the results were much greater than could have been anticipated from the goal which was at starting held in view.*

According to our view there is nothing that need disquiet England in Russia's movements, even if Afghanistan were to become dependent upon her. Russia's sphere of power would come into immediate contiguity with the East Indian dominion subsisting under British influence, and two powers, two civilised States, who both have a peculiar interest in the development of their material interests, and in the preservation of peace, would come into immediate contact with one another. We can see no greater danger in this than in the case of other great powers. If England supposes that her commercial interests are threatened by Russia's approach, a conflict, sword in hand, would be a very foolish way of repulsing the advancing power. Such a course would only bring injury to England.

Let it be, moreover, granted that England succeeded in repulsing her dreaded neighbour for the moment, and shut her off from contact with India, yet the physical qualifications of the two great powers are far too dissimilar, for England, which is an insular power situated in Europe, to be able to withstand, for any length of time, pressure from Russia who has her resources much nearer at hand, and could far more readily reinforce and complete them. But that Russia will not be intimidated by one or more abortive attempts is shown by its whole past history, and by the steps which it has taken in Asia. Besides this the time is past when trade could be forced into arbitrary directions by the sword. If it were of greater advantage to India to exchange her wares with Russian than with English products, England would have to make up its mind to concur. By such a course only could India be benefited, and no one can deny that England's duty lies in this direction, and not in that of using the country for her own selfish purposes. /

For the moment Russia has enough to do to improve the communication in the territory over which her power extends, and to secure commerce. Moreover, even if formal peace and friendship exist between the rulers of the States of Central Asia and Russia, this is not the case with the inhabitants of a great part of the territory, who consist of unsettled freebooting nomad tribes. This is especially the case in Khiva, which, up to the present time, has preserved its independence.

On the 5th April 1870 a band of Kirghiz from the Oust-Ourt steppe attacked the Russian Fort Alexandrovsk, which is situated on the peninsula of Mangishlak on the east shore of the Caspian Sea, and made prisoners of a detachment of Cossacks whom they found in the neighbourhood of the fort. That the Russians will not permit these robber tribes to continue their disorders, is to be expected from the energy they have hitherto shown in all their measures in Asia; so then a conflict with Khiva cannot be deferred, and, perhaps, one is close at hand.

The telegraphic news received lately from Bombay, that Russia was meditating a march upon Khiva, is premature, and may have been occasioned by hearing of the expedition undertaken by the Russians against the Kirghiz horde who attacked the fort. Unless Russia has sufficiently protected her rear and flank, and knows herself to be secure from the attacks of such robber tribes, she will not think of making further advances towards the south of Asia.

We have also seen that of the lines of traffic struck out by Russia for the promotion of commerce with Central Asia—that from Siberia and that from the Caspian Sea,—the first only was attended with results, albeit *they* were undoubtedly of a superior character.

In the meantime the other line has been in no way abandoned. An expedition was sent on the 10th November 1869 to the east shore of the Caspian Sea, but this time with the decided aim of founding a colony, without further objects in view for the present than the promotion and security of trade.

On the above-mentioned day General Stabsobersst Stoljetoff left Petrovsk on the west coast of the Caspian Sea in two steamers, carrying with him a battalion of the 88th Daghestan regiment, a detachment of 80 sappers, 70 Cossacks, a battery of mountain artillery, a division of unmounted field artillery, and landed on the 17th and 19th November in the Bay of Krasnovodsk near the Valley of Kumsdug, where the springs of Schagadam, Sindchekui, and Balkui are situated. A suitable spot was selected for the establishment of a colony, and the work of founding one was begun.

This spot, the same that we have often had occasion to mention in our narrative, will in time, perhaps in the immediately approaching future, be of great significance, if, as is not to be doubted, the Russians succeed in establishing themselves there, and in attracting thither the stream of Central Asian commerce, so as to bring that commerce into connection with Russia and the rest of Europe by the route of the Krasnovodsk and the Caspian Sea.

We will, therefore, consider it from a close point of view.

The Bay of Krasnovodsk is the most north-westerly part of the Balkan Bay, one of the southernmost indentations in the east coast of the Caspian Sea.

The situation is peculiarly well protected, lying as it does between two capes, the most westerly of which is also called Krasnovodsk.

This is the narrowest part of the Caspian Sea, inasmuch as the distance between Cape Krasnovodsk on the east, and Cape Apsheron on the west, amounts only to 200 versts,—a distance which can be traversed by steamers in less than ten hours. The Bay of Krasnovodsk is situated in the 10th degree of north latitude, opposite to the town of Bakoo

a/ in the Caucasus (Daghestan) more to the south than Constantinople or Naples, and on the same parallel as Samarkund,—a circumstance which, as we shall see, is of the greatest importance. L/

Although the occupation of this spot by the Russians, as has been shewn by the whole of our narrative, is quite natural for the purpose of conducting the trade of Asia by the shortest and easiest route, yet endeavours have been made to attribute to this step on the part of Russia all kinds of motives of annexation and the most hostile designs against her neighbours in Central Asia. At one time it is an attack on Khiva, at another on Herat, at another on Persia, that is, to follow this step of occupying with an armed force the spot on Krasnovodsk Bay. And when Persia has been brought into subjection, then Russia will, according to the opinion of certain political prophets, “by means of the greatest act of bad faith that has been known in the history of the world,” advance over Asia Minor to Constantinople and so solve the eastern question in the most impressive manner.

It is probably not to be supposed that any one, when setting forth such fantastic pictures, would consider it worth while to take the map into counsel. For it must then have been seen that if Russia really cherished such designs, she need not take the circuitous route across the Caspian Sea, in order, as alarmists predict, to push on from thence through Persia along the Euphrates, and from thence, over the Highlands of Asia Minor, to the Bosphorus.

So weak a country as Persia, which is, moreover, on the friendliest terms with Russia, would hardly dare to put a veto upon her movements, even if she actually cherished the idea of attacking Turkey on Asiatic grounds. But in such a case, the Russians, instead of taking an absurdly circuitous course of several hundred miles over steppes and impassable mountains, would certainly choose the simple route from Achalzich, through the valleys of the Koor and the Araxes, from whence they could reach Erzerum and the tableland of Asia Minor in as many weeks as they would have to spend years if they undertook the other adventurous course.

The idea that the Russians, in founding a colony in Krasnovodsk Bay, are actuated by designs on Herat, has been especially taken up by the well known traveller, Vambéry. It is singular that this man who knows better than any European, and describes in such lively

colours the miserable administration that reigns in all the khanates of Central Asia, whose condition is almost that of complete barbarism, should be so averse to the advance of Russia, which is the best means of improving the condition of the people, and so of bringing advantage to the whole world.

In all Russia's measures in Central Asia he only sees plans of conquest and selfish aggrandisement; and in each step that she takes to strengthen her power and to spread civilization in Asia, he perceives designs unfavorable to England, which, however, cannot boast of any great merit in improving the barbaric condition of Asia.

Herr Vamberg's opinion is, that if Russia's motive was merely to establish a station for the security and promotion of trade, she would have chosen, in preference, one far more to the north, *viz.*, Mertvii Kultuk, which is situated in a bay of the Caspian five degrees further to the north. From thence it would have been a comparatively short distance to the Aral Sea, and to the mouths of the Amoo-Daria, the principal artery of traffic in Central Asia. Besides the shallowness of that river in various places, by which the passage of vessels would be much impeded, and without taking into consideration the fluctuating depth of the Aral Sea, history bears witness to its having more than once completely dried up.

There are two facts in the way which would effectually hinder Herr Vamberg's chosen spot from being the best adapted for the starting point of Russian trade in Central Asia,—facts which, remembering Herr Vamberg's exact knowledge of the condition of Asia, cannot be unknown to him, *viz.*, the extreme shallowness of the Caspian Sea at this spot, and the fact of its waters being frozen during a great part of the year. It would, therefore, be impossible to make use of this spot in order to conduct a brisk trade from Central Asia to the Caspian Sea, that is, so brisk a trade as may be expected from the measures which the Russians have actually taken, and from those for which they have made preparations.

Herr Vamberg thinks that the route from the Amoo-Daria to Krasnovodsk, through the desert of Khwarizm, is impracticable; but he himself traversed it in the hottest time of the year, from the 15th of May to the 2nd June, and it has been similarly crossed by several caravans. Even in 1869 a caravan, set out from Khiva to Krasnovodsk, reached it after 30 days' march—its daily march being from

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thirty-two to thirty-five versts. The direct route is only 600 versts, but they were obliged to make a detour in order to pass near the springs in the desert. The caravan then marched along the east shore of the Caspian Sea, and arrived finally at Astrachan.

There the caravan people openly expressed a wish that a station might be established at Krasnovodsk, so that caravans might not lose their time waiting for vessels before unlading their merchandise.

The tract of land between the Amoo-Daria and the Caspian Sea is also easily traversed, and the Russians have made good provision for the easiness of the transit.

It is known that the Amoo-Daria flowed formerly into the Caspian instead of into the Aral Sea, and on the maps the old bed of the river is still marked.

In the year 1714 the Toorkoman Khoja Nefes appeared in St. Petersburg before Peter the Great, and shared with him an important secret, *viz.*, that in the district which the Amoo-Daria had overflowed in its upper course, there were to be found gold sands which, with a little trouble, might become a source of profit.

He also expressed his opinion that there would be no great difficulty in conducting the Amoo-Daria back to its old bed into the Caspian Sea. The question was to find out through the Khivans the dam that had been constructed in the channel and to dig through it. Peter the Great took up this idea, and one of the commands of the Czar to Prince Bekowitch, when he started on the expedition (which we mentioned in page 3), was, that he should search for the situation of this dam. The expedition failed entirely as we have seen, and, during the next 150 years, no further thought was bestowed on the Amoo-Daria till this last year, when the Imperial Geographical Society of St. Petersburg resolved to search for its old bed.

Should these researches show that it will be possible to re-conduct the river back to the Caspian Sea, and should this colossal work be carried out, there would be uninterrupted water communication between Central Asia and Russia's most important trading point, Nij-novgorod, by means of the Volga, Caspian Sea, and Amoo-Daria; and trade between Asia and Europe would thereby receive a great impetus. But

01/ this means communication will, in the course of time, be found hardly satisfactory for other reasons besides its interruption in winter. And the great modern means of communication—the railway—must come into play, in order to give to the trade between the two parts of the world in question the life and vigour which its importance demands.

If plans have already been formed in earnest for the construction of a railway from the Aral Sea through the Kirghiz steppe along the Emba, and permission to look out for the most suitable line for such a railway has been conceded, it may be taken for granted that preparations for designing the far more important junction between the Amoo-Daria and the Caspian Sea, which offers more advantages than the other plan, will not be long delayed.

2/ 01/ Herr Vambéry, to be sure, asserts that this is not the natural route for commerce between Russia and Central Asia, because the interior of Russia has always been connected with Toorkistan by two high roads, of which the one passed through Tashkund and Kokund and had its terminus at Troitsk, while the other started from Bokhara and Khiva and ended at Orenbourg. But Herr Vambéry adds himself that it takes at least six or eight weeks in the most favorable time of the year to accomplish either of these journeys. It is inconceivable that Herr Vambéry can find it strange, under these circumstances, that the Russian authorities should look about for a shorter means of communication between Central Asia and their own commercial towns. The road from the Volga by Samara and Orenbourg to Tashkund is 2,500 versts, and from Troitsk the distance between Russia and Central Asia is 300 versts longer. The road is also full of difficulties, as for a long distance its course is through waterless steppes, and so it is, too, in the case of the Orenbourg route, through the Karakoom desert and the Troitsk route, through the Golodnaya steppe, which latter is appropriately called also the famine steppe.

By these routes the cost of transport of goods from Central Asia to Moscow is from 3 to 4 Roubles per pood ( $32\frac{1}{2}$  zollpfund), while the freight of goods sent by Krasnovodsk amounts to 1 or, at most,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Roubles.

Moreover, the time that Vambéry allows for transport is the minimum, and frequently exceeds it by from three to five months, while the route from Krasnovodsk and from thence along the Caspian and the Volga only occupies half that time.

It cannot be considered strange that Russia should choose the latter route, now that the political difficulties which, up to the present time, had prevented its being made use of, are now so near their final dissipation.

The advantages of uniting Central Asia with Russia through the southern part of the Caspian Sea, increase in proportion as the places in Asia, which it is desired to connect with the Russian market, lie more to the south. So, for example, the distance from Samarkund to Krasnovodsk amounts to 1,100 versts, while that town is more than 3,000 versts removed from Samara on the Voga, one of the chief spots of the old routes of commerce. And when, later on, the question comes to turn on the connection with Afghanistan, and even with India, this difference in the length of the journey will tell still more in the scales.

But the full importance of the Russian settlement on Krasnovodsk Bay cannot be fully appreciated without taking into consideration the situation of the Caucasus between the Caspian and the Black Sea, and without calling to mind the measures which have been in part completed, in part prepared, for improving the communication with that region. Last year the Governor of the Caucasus, Prince Michael Nikolaievich, laid before the Council of the Empire a plan for a complete system of railways, which would secure political, commercial, and strategical connection of the Caucasus with European Russia. The plan was approved by the Council, accepted by the Empire, and action is to be taken thereon in the present year, 1871. Two hundred and twelve German miles of railway are to be laid down every year (the line from the Amoo-Daria to Krasnovodsk is not so much as this by half), of which two-thirds will be constructed for commercial and political and one-third for strategical purposes. A railway is to be taken to ~~K~~ostow on the Don (which is already connected with the rest of Russia) by a line which will pass Stavropol and Georgiewsk, will end for the present at Vladi Kavkas, and will be ultimately extended to Tiflis. A second line is to connect Vladi Kavkas with the recently constructed harbour of Petrovsk, whence arrangements are to be made for a line of communication with the northerly half of the east shore of the Caspian Sea, *viz.*, with the peninsula of Mangishlak and Fort Alexandrofsk situated thereon. A third railroad is to be the means of connecting the harbour of ~~K~~ostow, which freezes in winter, and that of Golendchik, which is open all the

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year round. But the most important line of all is that which is to extend from the west coast of the Caspian to the Black Sea and along the southern slopes of the Caucasus. The western half of this line from the town of Poti on the Black Sea to Tiflis is already commenced, and will soon be finished.\* From Tiflis the line will be carried on in a south-easterly direction to Bakoo, on the west shore of the Caspian Sea, opposite to Krasnovodsk. On the completion of this route, there will be uninterrupted railway communication between St. Petersburg and one of the most southerly points of that gigantic Empire over a distance of more than 300 German miles. Ten years ago, the idea of such a communication with Central Asia being established in thinly-populated Russia would have been considered a ludicrous stretch of the imagination, but at present it has really become an accomplished fact.

*21* With what energy the Russians have gone to work in developing their projected railway, is well proved by the construction of the line from Kotersk to Kostow on the Don. On the 13th March 1868 the concession was given for this line, which covers 110 German miles, and in the course of 18 months it was finished. What other nation could boast of having completed such a work in so short a time? And what may not be expected from such energy, when the question is mooted of conducting Indian and Chinese trade into new channels, primarily for the benefit of Russia, but also indirectly for that of the whole of Europe? A direct communication between the east coast of Asia and the west of Europe—a communication which even now, after the opening of the Suez Canal, is only to be achieved by an extremely circuitous route—will, after what Russia has accomplished in the last ten years, no longer be looked upon as a dream.

But Russia's civilizing mission is not confined to Central Asia. The advances which she is making in the east of Asia are, perhaps, of still greater importance. In the former, as we have seen, Russia's endeavours have been directed to forming communication with India, but, in the latter, the object is actual contact with China, the most populous empire of the earth. Notwithstanding the Russians having taken possession of immense districts, which were under the dominion of the Emperor of China, the relations between Russia and China are not

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\* It has now been completed.—[ Translator. ]

unfriendly, and Russia has received the concession of important commercial privileges, of which she understands how to make the best use.

Whether these friendly relations will continue, as the Russian's power extends further south, is another question. The River Amoo can hardly serve any longer to mark the boundary of the Russian possessions in the east of Asia, for steamers are being sent from it by one of its tributaries, the Songari, into the heart of Manchooria.

From Petun Choton, which is situated on this river, and is one of the chief towns of the country, to the borders of China, the distance is only 40 miles, to Pekin 130 miles, and to the Chinese wall still less. What will the Chinese say when the Russians manifest an intention of crossing it? And from another point, the Russians are approaching the Chinese dominions, *viz.*, in Mongolia. They have established themselves as a preliminary in the town of Oorga, 40 miles from the Siberian boundary, where the great monastery of the Lama-King of Mongolia is situated. On the occasion of the recent disturbances in Mongolia, which were greatly exaggerated, the *Invalide* remarked that the Russian Government could not look on quietly if Russian trade were injured in those regions. Also, if there were an insurrection of the Khalkhas Mongolians against the Chinese Government, the Russians could not remain neutral, but would certainly take the part of the Mongolians, the consequence of which attitude would be a still closer connection than at present.

Russian interests in Mongolia are served in a most efficient manner by Consul Shishmareff residing in Oorga, who has not only upheld the prestige of the Russian empire among the Mongolians, but has also explored and reconnoitred the country in every direction. Thus, in 1864, he discovered the source of the Onow, a tributary of the Amoo, in the territory of Daur, and in 1868 he penetrated as far as Ouliasutai in Russian Mongolia (*sic*), 1,300 versts from Oorga. The distance between Oorga and the source of the Songari does not exceed 1,000 versts. Nothing is more natural than that the Russian Consul should direct his steps thither, and so become the pioneer of a scheme for uniting these two important points. At the inducement of the Russian Geographical Society, the Russian Archimandrit Pallady in Pekin has recently undertaken extensive journeys in Manchooria, in the course of which he has visited many places to which no other traveller

has penetrated. It is hoped that the account of these highly interesting journeys, which was read before the Society on 19th October 1870, will shortly be published.

In the cause of commerce and culture, the advance of Russia in these tracts is not less desirable than in Central Asia; but for the intervention of Russia, savagery would have maintained a permanent abode in this inaccessible region; now civilization will, though gradually, dawn upon it.

The Russian Government is really very patient in its dealings with the different tribes with which it comes into contact in Asia, and the milder influence of Christianity will everywhere make itself felt as the Russians advance further.

While the Russian advance has been slow but steady in the extreme east\* and in the centre of China, its advance in the west of the Central Kingdom has been hampered by an energetic Prince, who has, in defiance of the Court of Pekin, succeeded in conquering and maintaining his independence. This Prince is Yakoob Beg, the ruler of Kashgar and Yarkund, East Toorkistan, which was not long ago included in the Chinese dominions, but which, at present, is on a footing of its own. The condition of these countries is described differently by the English and Russians. The Englishman Shaw, possessor of a tea plantation in the Punjab, undertook a journey to Kashgar in order to enter into commercial relations with that country. He was well received by Yakoob Beg, and is now full of his praises, while he cannot sufficiently extol the fruitfulness and the rich cultivation of this thickly-populated land.

It is said that the English Government, in consequence of his report, has entered into official communication with Yakoob Beg, and that regular commerce between India and East Toorkistan will be the result. It would be gratifying if one could place implicit belief in this news. But the Russian statement is quite different. It represents

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\* This advance towards the south is not merely directed against China, but against Japan, and is most marked in the Island of Saghalien, which the Russians and Japanese have hitherto shared. But now the Russians are pressing onward across the boundary, and a conflict between the two nations appears imminent.

Yakoob Beg as an avaricious tyrant who disposes of the lives and property of his subjects at his caprice. Notwithstanding that an advantageous trade with Russia is in his power, because the rich products of East Toorkistan, such as wool, cotton, silk, gold dust, furs, &c., must meet with a ready demand in Russia, which would, in return, send woollen and cotton fabrics, iron and steel goods, leather, coral, &c. Yakoob Beg puts every possible difficulty in the way of commerce, takes arbitrary tolls on goods brought thither from Russia, and places the leaders of the caravans under the strictest surveillance during their stay in Toorkistan, so that they are prevented from carrying on this trade in freedom.

It is, of course, possible that Yakoob Beg's unfriendly attitude towards Russia is due to his perhaps just apprehension that if he has much dealings with that country he may be reduced to the same state of subjection that the neighbouring Khans have undergone. However that may be, he will not be able long to withstand the stream of commerce coming from the north, and he would certainly be acting a wiser part by making his country the central point of trade between Russia and India, and thus benefiting both those countries and his own as well. Once Russia has firmly planted herself in the west of Central Asia, she will certainly endeavour to secure the safety and practicability of this most important trade route, and any opposition on the part of Yakoob Beg will prove of little avail. For the reasons explained in page 11, England would scarcely offer any lengthened or serious opposition to a trade between Russia and India, if it took this direction, inasmuch as she herself would be a loser by so doing. But in whatever way the relations between Russia and Yakoob Beg are settled, whether in the same manner as in Bokhara and Kokund, or whether by force, the advance made by the Russian power in this quarter adds much to the extent to which she will be able to influence China. For even though East Toorkistan is, in point of fact, independent of China, and though a Russian settlement in that territory would not be directly prejudicial to Chinese rule, yet Russia would then be embracing the celestial kingdom on three sides by simultaneous advances in the east, from the west, and in the centre, and China would not be able to withstand the powerful influence of the Northern Colossus. We do not, however, contemplate an actual subjection of China on the part of the Russians. Such an event, if it is ever to occur, will be reserved for future centuries.

That, too, is not the object in view; but the spread of civilization which undoubtedly follows the advance of Russian power, and which has opened out European culture and commerce to these wild masses of people, giving to trade an impetus of which the wildest imagination could not have dreamed.

The Chinese Government will scarcely be brought to adapt itself to close and stirring contact with the European barbarians, and will probably have to be compelled into accepting the benefit. Meanwhile Russian diplomacy by subtlety and adroitness (*feinheit und gewandtheit*) has already succeeded in obtaining from the Chinese Government concessions which other powers have scarcely been able to extort by force of arms.

This was exemplified on the occasion of the last great conflict between the western powers of Europe and China, and it may happen again, as, after the late events at Peking (the murder of the French missionaries and other French subjects, and also of three Russians), serious complications seem unavoidable.

We should not regret these complications, even if they were to produce bloody consequences, provided that they caused the Chinese Government to grant still further concessions for the encouragement of trade. We should look upon it as a triumph of advancing civilization, and a proof of the unprejudiced appreciation of the true interests of mankind, if the great nations who are principally concerned in the matter, *viz.*, France, England, and Russia, joined hands in order to advance a work, which would be too much for the powers of one nation to achieve, were she even the mightiest and richest among them.

If through-the whole of the vast Empire of China unreserved free trade was opened with Europe, then the question would be how to lead commerce into the routes which would bring most advantage to Asia and Europe. That by sea will not suffice, the route from Nankin and Canton to London and Paris, and even to Vienna, Berlin, and St. Petersburg through the Chinese and Indian Oceans and the Red and Mediterranean Seas, is too long for the commercial necessities of the present day. To bring the gigantic towns of Asia into nearer and contact with their European sisters, you must not choose the way, which would be represented by more than

a semi-circle, but must take to the chord which goes straight between the two extremities. This can only be accomplished by means of continuous railway communication through East and Central Asia, the intervening lines of the Caucasus and the Danube being united by steam communication on the Black and Caspian Seas. This, the greatest of all the lines in the world, must commence at Nankin and follow the course of the Hoang-ho, to which a second line ought to be taken from Pekin. From China the line should continue along High Tartary and along the slopes of the Kiun-Loon till it reaches East Toorkistan, the wealthy towns of which province it would connect with the rest of Central Asia. From thence it should extend to the settlement of Krasnovodsk, the significance of which will now, perhaps, become obvious to the adversaries of the development of Russian power in Central Asia. This line would approach comparatively near to the boundaries of Hindoostan, and if the nature of the country offers extraordinary difficulties to the connection of the Chinese line with that already established in India (the highest chain of mountains in the world lying between) yet man's intellect may be expected to find means to carry on the line across the Himalayas, in the same way in which that through the Mont Cenis and over the St. Gotthard has brought, or is bringing, northern and southern Europe into close connection. From Krasnovodsk steamers would cross to Bakoo. At Tiflis the freight, which was destined for Russia, would branch off in a northern direction to Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Nijni-novgorod, while that for the centre and west of Europe would go by the Black Sea and from thence to Varna, or to the mouth of the Danube. From that point onwards it is not difficult to carry on the communication to the chief points of European commerce. From Varna there is already a railway leading to Roustchouk on the Danube. It would then remain to lay down a line along the valley of the Danube by Nikopoli and Widdin through the Irongate to Weisskirchen, and then there would be attained an uninterrupted communication with Ofen-Pest, Vienna, and the whole of Europe; or if it was thought preferable to conduct the main stream of commerce to the mouth of the Danube, a railway might be taken from the St. George's mouth of that river to Toolsha, Brailov, and Rymnik, and from thence over the Dinarish Alps, somewhere about the valley of the Bouseo to Kronstadt, and on from Herrmannstadt to Arad, where it would form a junction with the Hungarian line.

If the Russians are deprived of the help of other great nations in carrying out the colossal work that we have indicated in the above pages, the entire undertaking will devolve upon them, just as the impulse was certainly originally given by them. It is impossible to measure the consequent benefit to trade, and consequently civilization which will ensue. Even already Russia deserves the thanks of Europe for what she has done in the present day towards facilitating trade with the neighbouring regions of the globe.

To cause European culture and European influences to dawn on those countries, and especially on Central Asia, is Russia's mission. That she will in the end accomplish it, is vouched for by what she has already achieved.

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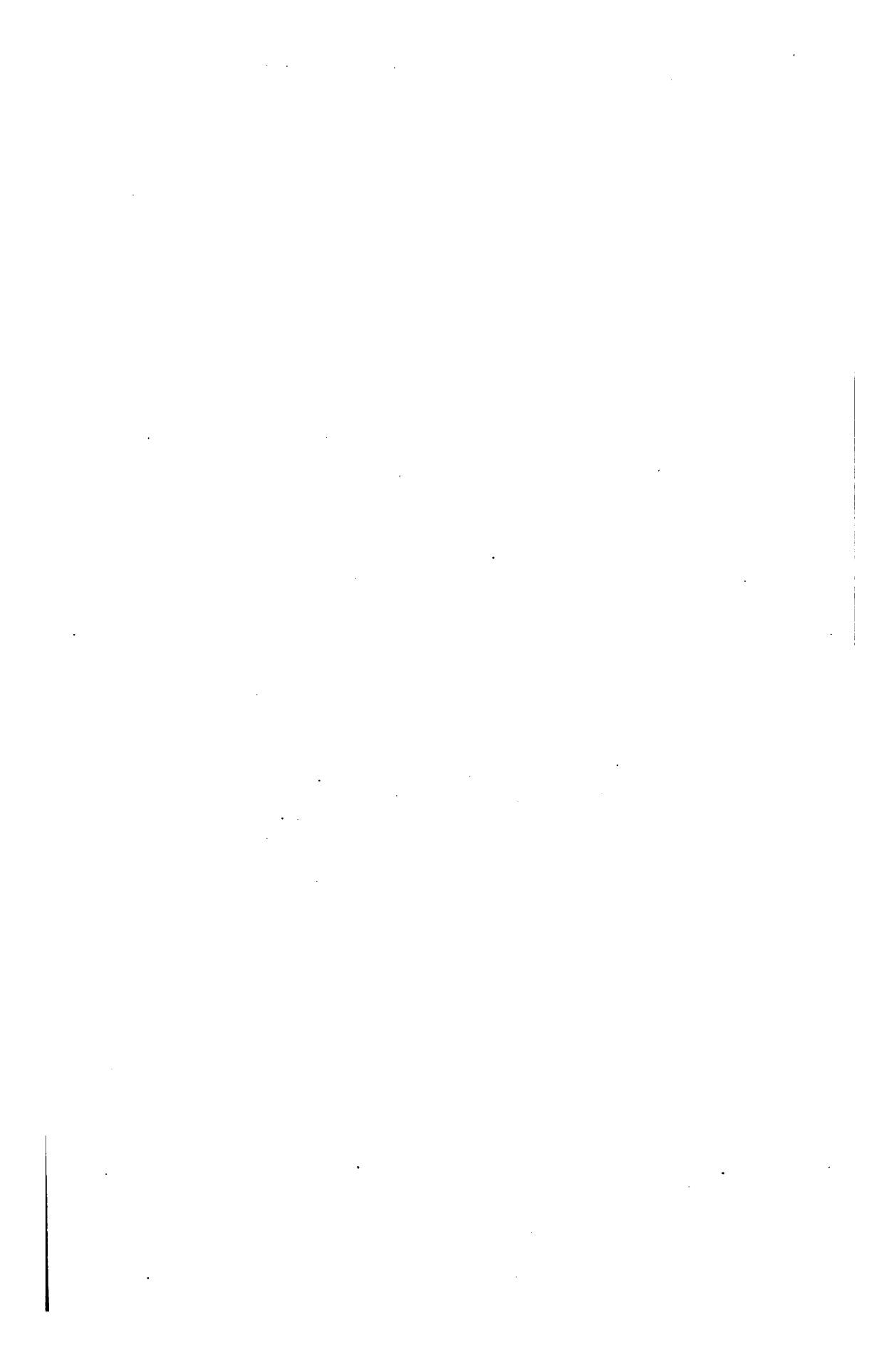
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